



Area Connection

August 2004



Area Board 6, 2529 W. March Lane, Ste. 105, Stockton, CA 95207 (209) 473-6930; info@areaboard6.org; www.areaboard6.ca.gov

Area Connection is a publication of the Area 6 Developmental Disabilities Board. Area boards are established under state law as a program of the **State Council on Developmental Disabilities**. They protect and advocate the rights of persons with developmental disabilities, and conduct local advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities. Area Board 6 serves Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tuolumne counties.

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State Budget

Governor Schwarzenegger signed the \$105.4 billion State Budget on July 31, 2004. There were no changes to items affecting people with developmental disabilities that had been agreed upon earlier in the budget process:

SSI- delay of 3 months to April 1, 2005 before passing on the cost of living adjustment to SSI recipients;

IHSS- Worker's wages will not be reduced, public authorities and their advisory committees will not be eliminated, the Residual Program will continue whether or not the federal government approves California's request for matching funds, and there will be a Quality Assurance Initiative.

Statewide POS- There will be no statewide standards on purchase of services (POS).

Family Share of Cost-

The new "Family Cost Participation Program" will begin January 1, 2005. Families with children 3 to 17 years of age who live in the family home and receive regional center services and are not eligible for Medi-Cal, whose incomes are above 400% of the federal poverty level would share in the cost of services for respite, day care, and camping.

For more info, please go online to our website at www.areaboard6.ca.gov. Click on "Governor Signs Budget" to link to Marty Omoto's excellent Capitol News Report. Click on "State Budget" to go to the Department of Finance website (www.dof.ca.gov). In the DOF website, click on "California Budget", then "Governor's Budget Summary", then "Health and Human Services".



Register to Vote!

The deadline to register to vote in the November 2, 2004 election is October 18, 2004.

You can get more information on your right to vote and even

register online through California Secretary of State's website at http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_vr.htm

For telephone information, please dial 1-800-345-VOTE for assistance in English, and 1-800-232-VOTA for Spanish.



*Paul L.
Symmonds*

The Advocate's Voice

Too Many Meds?

The Investigations Unit at Protection and Advocacy Inc. recently published an excellent report titled, *Psychiatric Polypharmacy: A Word of Caution*. The administration of more than one psychiatric drug to a single patient (polypharmacy) is a common practice, despite expert testimony and research that shows this practice presents dangerous risks and poor results in almost every case. This report highlights three deaths that were directly related to medication regimens consisting of multiple psychiatric medications. Tragic as they were, these deaths were a small cube in the iceberg of medication issues affecting people with developmental disabilities.

People are prescribed psychiatric drugs for many reasons. Some control epilepsy. Some relieve movement disorders. Some alleviate symptoms of anxiety or depression. Some are even necessary to treat psychosis. And rarely, a certain level of psychiatric medication is required to help an individual manage dangerously impulsive behavior. In all cases, people need to be aware of the potential for adverse drug reactions.

All drugs produce side effects. Even over-the-counter

aspirin has the potential of eroding your stomach lining or triggering Reyes Syndrome, a life-threatening condition. Some psychiatric drugs have such severe side effects that other medications must be prescribed to counteract them. And every combination of drugs carries a greater risk for adverse reactions. The risk is even greater for people who have difficulty communicating the effects that their prescriptions have upon them. So what can we do?

Many protocols and procedures on the administration of psychiatric medications already exist. If followed, they are quite effective. However, some common sense principles should also be applied. First, psychiatric medication should always be a necessity, not a convenience. If an alternative intervention requires a little more time and effort, but does not involve the introduction of a chemical into the body, then that is the preferable method. Second, unless it is for the treatment of a chronic condition, like schizophrenia or epilepsy, psychiatric medication should always be viewed as a temporary strategy to be used only until some other non-toxic intervention can be implemented. And even when it is necessary, great care should be taken to determine the lowest effective dosage.

Prescribing doctors are most responsible for insuring

the safety of people taking medications. However, every one of us who knows someone that takes psychiatric medications must share the responsibility of observing and reporting on the effects of these medications. If you know what to look for, you just might save a life.

Interesting Websites

www.NeedyMeds.com

Information about patient assistance programs which provide no cost prescription medications to eligible participants.

www.ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits.htm

Preparing for a disability interview or completing an online application for benefits

www.capwiz.com/thearc/home/

Helps you keep track of what is going on in Congress and your State Legislature—also helps you communicate with your elected representatives.

www.disabilitybenefits101.org

Provides current and accurate information so that Californians can improve their employment, health coverage and benefits.

www.searchdisabilities.com

Provides current information on medical research, assistive technology, and independent

Upcoming Events

Special Education Rights Workshops

There is **no cost** to attend the following workshops but **reservations are required.**



Please mail, phone, or e-mail

your
reservation to the
Area 6 Board Office.



September 7, 2004

6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Modesto City Schools
Staff Development Room 2
426 Locust Street
Modesto

September 14, 2004

6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Aspira Foster & Family Services
151 E. Canal Drive
Turlock

October 7, 2004

6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
General Services Administration
Conference Room A
12200 B Airport Road
Jackson

November 3, 2004

6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
*Location in **Stockton**
to be Announced*

December 2, 2004

6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Safeway Store Community Rm
1801 W. 11th Street
Tracy

January 6, 2005

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
*Location in **Oakdale**
to be Announced*

February 3, 2005

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
*Location in **Manteca**
to be Announced*

March 17, 2005

6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
*Location in **Lodi**
to be Announced*

April 7, 2005

6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Sonora Regional Medical Ctr
Health Info Center
Conference Room, Ste. 907
1000 Greenley Road
Sonora

May 5, 2005

6:00 pm to 7:45 pm
San Andreas/Calaveras Library
891 Mt. Ranch Road
San Andreas

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Abuse & Disabilities Across the Lifespan

First Professional Online
Training Conference

September 9 to 30, 2004

Register online at [www.
disability-abuse.com](http://www.disability-abuse.com)

For information or to register
via mail call Arc Riverside
Toll Free at 1-888-818-6298
or fax 909-688-7207
\$150 for 22 one-hour webinars
from the leaders in the field.

***As a State cost-saving
measure—our Newsletter is
now available on line at
www.areaboard6.ca.gov.
If you would like to receive
it by e-mail, please send us
your e-mail address.
THANK YOU!***

Benefits & Employment in 2004 -

MediCal, Medicare, Social Security, and SSI

*How to earn significant income
and protect medical benefits.
How to maintain eligibility for
benefits using work incentives.*

August 13, 2004

Humane Society
of Tuolumne County,
10040 Victoria Way,
Jamestown
For more information
Call Watch Resources
At 533-0510

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Supported Life 2004: “Keeping the Promise of Inclusive Communities”

Empowering People with
Severe Disabilities to be Fully
Included in the Community

October 6—8, 2004

DoubleTree Hotel
Sacramento
For more information,
Call 916-567-1974

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VMRC Invites you to Freedom Fair, Solutions for Better Living

Tuesday, August 17, 2004

11:00 am to 5:00 pm
The University of the Pacific
School of Pharmacy
757 Brookside Road
Stockton
For more info call Kate Riggio
at 209-955-3363

California Performance Review

This report proposes to reform the way California provides services to its residents.

Over 1,000 recommendations are presented that aim to make state government more accountable, efficient, effective, flexible, and responsive, and save \$32 billion over five years.

To view the report online, go to this site:

<http://www.report.cpr.ca.gov>

Jobs Survey

The Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts recently published results of a survey on employment and non-work service trends for providers and people with developmental disabilities.

Despite major federal legislative initiatives that established a new paradigm for support (supported employment) in the mid-1980's and continuous federal policy emphasizing employment of people with developmental disabilities, **the survey results are discouraging:** "...there continues to be a bias toward sheltered and non-work services in funding and service delivery, including a substantial continuing investment in shel-

tered employment services."

The survey can be accessed online at www.communityinclusion.org

Local Efforts on Transition and Jobs

Local groups of parents, staff from VMRC and the Area 6 Board, community agencies, and County School, SELPA and District staff, have been meeting to improve transition from school to work and increase employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities in Stanislaus County.

If you are interested in joining, or learning more about these groups, please call Bob at (209) 473-6930 or e-mail to bob@areaboard6.org



State of California

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Area Board 6

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Stockton, CA 95207

Return Service Requested

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removed from our
mailing list, please call
(209) 473-6930*